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CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

RURAL AREAS
DEVELOPMENT

NEWSLETTER

November 1967

NO. 89

GROUP ACTION BRINGS BIG RESULTS



Since the Livingston Redevelopment Association, Inc., was formed in 1963, with Extension Service help, unemployment in Livingston Parish, Louisiana, has dropped from 20 to 8.5 percent.

The association's program has brought new industries and new and expanded community facilities to the predominantly rural agricultural area.

These include:

-- A 55-bed hospital has been completed near Denham Springs with Hill-Burton matching funds.

-- Improved water distribution for residential and industrial users has been approved through formation of the Greater Livingston Water Company.

-- Natural gas systems have been expanded, and new ones have been installed.

-- A sewer system expansion costing more than \$1 million has been completed in Denham Springs.

-- Voters have approved issuance of \$800,000 in tax bonds for a new parish courthouse, and voted an additional seven-mill tax for school maintenance. During the past 3 years, voters have approved \$1,246,000 in new school construction.

-- At least five new plants have moved into the area, employing more than 500 people, and other companies are expected to move into the area.

* * *

FARMERS BEAT FLOODING PROBLEM -- WITH HELP

Farmers in a 25,000-acre area in Dewey and Grow townships, in the Pri-Ru-Ta Resource Conservation and Development Project in Wisconsin, were losing crops on good silt loam through flooding caused by inadequate channel capacity.



Local landowners sponsored construction of 35 miles of new channels to remove excess water. They agreed to pay for land easements, rights-of-way, roads, and utilities.

The total installation cost of work completed the first 3 years is estimated at \$44,225. Estimated annual benefits are \$36,232. Benefits are expected to increase to \$150,000 a year when the project is completed.

Associated land treatment included surface field ditches, terraces, diversions, grassed waterways, contouring, and conservation cropping systems. Similar work is expected to spread to 130 farms and eventually result in total benefits of more than \$500,000 a year.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service provided cost-sharing to landowners for establishing conservation practices on farm lands. The State Conservation Department provided information and technical assistance. The State Extension Service helped organize and conduct group activities. The Rusk County Highway Committee, and the townships of Dewey and Grow, installed bridges and culverts on road crossings.

The Soil Conservation Service provided technical assistance in planning, design, and construction. The Farmers Home Administration provided association loans, soil and water conservation loans, farm improvement loans, and farm ownership loans.

* * *

THERE ARE SAVINGS IN STORE FOR THEM



A small cinderblock building on a West Virginia creek bank is helping people of the area put food on their tables at a reasonable cost -- and showing what people can do when they join to solve problems.

The building is a community-owned, low-profit grocery store that went into operation last fall at Gilbert Creek as an answer to the pinch of rising prices.

The area has been described as a "billion dollar coal field," but most family heads are unemployed. The community consists of frame and tarpaper homes strung out along a stream polluted by mine residue.

To help solve the area's food cost problem, the Gilbert Creek Community Action Group formed a corporation, sold 543 shares of stock at \$10 each (keeping most of the stock) and rented and renovated the building for a store.

The business operates on a 10 percent markup. It employs two people full-time and one part-time. Seventeen wholesalers supply the store. The store also is permitted to handle food stamp sales.

Business is gaining steadily. Over a recent 4-month period sales increased

from \$2,700 to \$8,000 a month, and the people of the area are now exploring a plan to set up a credit union, with their store providing the initial capital.

* * *

RESORT HELPS AREA, ELECTRIC CO-OP



Before Chestnut Mountain Ski Resort was built in Illinois, the land on which the lodge is built yielded about \$20 a summer from four loads of hay.

This year, the lodge expects to gross more than \$1 million, and an estimated 3 to 4 times that amount will be spent in the general area.

Officials of the Jo-Carroll Rural Electric Cooperative say a \$22,068 loan from Rural Electrification Administration was the key to the resort's success because the co-op's willingness to put money behind the project inspired and reassured others so they decided to extend more credit and financing.

The resort plans to add a 150-room motel in the near future.

The resort accounts for one-tenth of the cooperative's total revenue. The annual power bill is almost \$15,000. With installation of new equipment which will double snow-making capacity, the winter power bills are expected to increase, bringing the yearly total to almost \$20,000.

* * *

A BIG STEP FORWARD IN RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Fifteen new Resource Conservation and Development projects covering more than 40 million acres in 18 States were recently authorized for USDA planning assistance. This brings the total number of such projects to 41 since the program was launched in 1964.



Locally initiated and sponsored, the projects are aimed at increasing economic opportunities in rural areas by speeding up conservation and development of natural resources.

These are regional projects and in some instances cross State lines. The States of Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia, and Wyoming are involved.

Objectives of the projects vary widely -- everything from restoring strip-mined areas to improving rural housing, sanitation, and health facilities.

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POSTAGE AND FEES PAID

LOANS ARE HELPING MORE AND MORE

Farmers Home Administration loans to rural people increased during fiscal year 1967.



For example, 64,946 family farmers borrowed \$300,313,503 in operating loans, compared with the \$276,029,849 which was borrowed in fiscal 1966. These loans are used to buy livestock, machinery, seed, feed and other equipment and supplies, refinance debts, and make pasture, fencing, and other minor real estate improvements.

About 1.2 million rural people will benefit from loans and grants for new or improved water supply or waste disposal systems. This is about double the number helped by loans and grants in fiscal 1966.

And, more than 23,000 low-income rural families received economic opportunity loans totaling \$32,246,129. These loans were used to provide tools, supplies, and working space for individual families, and to develop new cooperatives or improve existing ones.

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NATURAL BEAUTY GUIDE ISSUED

Drawing on many years of research, plant exploration, conservation work, and management of National Forests and Grasslands, the Department of Agriculture has issued "A Guide to Natural Beauty," a 32-page booklet designed to be of use to persons and organizations working to beautify homes, communities, and countryside. This "how-to-do-it" brochure is illustrated by 36 color photographs. Copies may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, for 55 cents each. Please include your zipcode.